



Tool: Building an Inclusive Business

Organizational Structure and Policies

- Create a diversity statement highlighting your firm's stance on/commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Develop partnerships with organizations that support diverse communities in your field.
- Build a staff and board that are representative of the individuals you are serving. Consider all forms of diversity, including race, gender, disability, language, and socioeconomic status.
- Consider diversity training to help staff better understand and support those you serve.
- Create a confidentiality policy that identifies if and when confidentiality may be broken. Have employees and clients sign that they are aware of and understand the policy.

Accessibility

- Ensure any physical office structures are ADA compliant. If there is a parking lot, ensure that there is adequate lighting and security for the safety of clients and employees.
- Note that some individuals may be fluent in spoken English, but not in written English. Create content in the language(s) that are used by the community you are trying to serve.
- Take advantage of freely available materials. Many government agencies have printed material in multiple languages that are free for organizations to print and use. Sometimes organizations can even order pre-printed material from these agencies at no cost.

Inclusion

- Have a preferred name policy, where legal names are used where legally required, but in all other instances, a person's preferred name is used.
- Ask clients and employees what pronouns they prefer and encourage staff to share their preferred pronouns. Ensure that an expanded list of genders is included in any place where gender is requested.
- Designate unisex or individual bathrooms to accommodate the needs of individuals of any gender. Ensure that all bathrooms have a changing area.
- Regularly have individuals representing all communities that you serve or seek to serve to review the organization policies and marketing materials and offer suggestions for improvement.
- If a local organization, considering holding community events and/or open houses to invite the community to engage with your organization. This can also be a good opportunity to partner with other organizations in your community.

Marketing

- Target marketing on the communities you are trying to reach. If working with multiple communities, have targeted marketing for each group.
- Create focus groups to identify the best marketing medium(s) for the audiences you are trying to reach. Think beyond the internet and consider non-English print media, radio, flyers/posters, etc.
- Promote how your organization includes and supports communities, including language skills.

Website

- Ensure site is compatible with screen readers and that there is sufficient color contrast between text and background colors.
- Ensure all videos have captions/subtitles and all images have alt text.
- Make sure that underserved or marginalized communities are represented in images.
- Minimize use of jargon and/or overly complex language.
- Use non-gendered language (they instead of he/she, etc.)
- Make sure your diversity statement, DEI policies, etc. are visible on your homepage.
- Highlight partnerships with organizations that support diverse communities and/or DEI initiatives.
- If offering any free resources, make them clearly visible to first-time visitors to the site.

HR Policies

- Create equal leave policies for all employees, including equal parental leave for both parents.
- Consider shifting from separate sick and vacation time to PTO, which offers more flexibility for employees.
- Confirm the company's insurance policies support the needs of employees who might have special circumstances, including employees who are single parents, who have a disability, etc.
- Create an objective policy for salaries and promotions. Underrepresented individuals are less likely to negotiate pay, which can cause wage gaps over time.
- Create clear and objective job ladders with transparent pay bands. Pursue pay equity and make efforts, status, and outcomes unambiguous

Grievance Policy / Reporting Concerns

- Create a system for clients and employees to report grievances, including multiple reporting structures. For example, a grievance process that requires an employee to report concerns to their supervisor is useless for an employee whose concerns are about the supervisor.
- Have a way for clients and employees to report concerns anonymously. This process can identify concerns from individuals who do not trust a company's reporting process.
- This can result in a lot of general complaints. If this occurs, consider creating an anonymous organization-wide survey of employees and/or clients to determine whether the complaints are widely held or just from a few individuals.
- Be transparent about concerns that are raised and what steps the organization is taking to address the concerns.